

Deborah Tortorella

Real Estate Agent

Give a brief description of your business.

I am the sales manager of the Duxbury office of William Raveis Real Estate, Mortgage & Insurance, a family-owned real estate company founded in 1974 in Fairfield, Conn. I have been managing the Duxbury office since it opened in 2003.

How long have you been in business?

I was first licensed in Maine in 1979; then in Massachusetts in 1989. I put my real estate career on hold while raising my three children, and have been actively working in the Duxbury area since 1994.

How did you get started?

When I was first married we were transferred from Boston to Portland, Maine. After a long search, we bought our first home in a strong seller's market. Having a good agent working for us to find a home was critical, and he found us just what we wanted at just the right price. It seemed to be a very rewarding profession with many appealing elements – interesting houses and people, flexibility, creativity, and so on. Shortly after settling in, I obtained my Maine real estate license, thinking we would be there for some time. However, my Maine real estate career was short-lived as we were transferred the following year to Washington, D.C., where again, we had the good fortune to be referred to a wonderful husband-wife team who knew the area well. Having no familiarity with the area whatsoever, their knowledge and expertise was invaluable to us in finding a home in a market where interest rates were in the 12 percent range, only to go much higher later. They seemed to enjoy their work and I vowed that someday I would resume my real estate career. Our last transfer was back to Boston, where we purchased a home in Duxbury in 1984, and when my youngest child was 2, I obtained my Massachusetts real estate license.



PHOTOS/DAVID MACCAFERRI

Debbie Tortorella at her desk in the offices of William Raveis Real Estate in Duxbury.

What should people know about you and your business?

I love my job! Helping people just comes naturally to me and my job gives me the opportunity to do so on many levels – whether it's training a new agent, or helping someone master a new program, or consulting on a pricing proposal, or advising about a marketing plan or whatever the day may bring – it is never the same and it is never boring. I also enjoy technology and working for a company with a state-of-the-art website and all the latest agent tools and technologies has been wonderful.

What is the best business advice you ever received?

When I first entered the business in Duxbury, a seasoned commercial broker, and friend, said to me, "Just stay with it." What he didn't say in so many words, but what I took from his simple remark was, to be successful in real estate one can't just give up when the going gets tough.

Tell us a memorable story about your business.

My most memorable real estate story took place many years ago while showing homes to a young, first-time, home buyer couple. The door was to be left unlocked for our 2 o'clock appointment at a small house near the beach. We arrived at the appointed hour and knocked to be sure no one was home. Hearing no response, we let ourselves in. The scene before us was straight out of

"Animal House" – beer bottles and glasses strewn about, dirty pots and pans overflowing the kitchen sink, and a bowl of half-eaten cereal on the table. There were boots, shoes and various articles of clothing scattered all around, and the place looked like it hadn't been cleaned in a very long time. We next discovered a garden hose connected to the kitchen sink faucet which we traced across the kitchen floor, down the hall to the bathroom, and up the side of the shower stall where it apparently was serving as a makeshift shower head - innovative plumbing, to be sure! At this point we almost turned and left as this house clearly would require more work than my buyers wanted to take on. Nevertheless, we continued on through the living room to a similar scene of chaos. Just beyond the living room a bedroom door was slightly ajar so, with my young couple close on my heels, I pushed it open only to be confronted by the sight of two people lying face down (thankfully!) on the bed, stark naked, out cold and completely oblivious to the fact that we were there! Needless to say, we tiptoed out as quietly and quickly as we could, and my buyers just as quickly crossed that house off their list! We had a good laugh, and it was a showing I will never forget.

Tell us about a mistake you made in business. What did you learn from it?

I think the biggest mistake I made when I went back into real estate in 1994 in Duxbury was not affiliating with a company that had a strong and proven new agent training program. For all intents and purposes, I was starting all over again, but I chose to work for a small, family-owned company that offered little in the way of new agent training because I knew a couple of agents there. Fortunately for me, some of those wonderful agents took me under their wing, I didn't make any major blunders, and these

many years later we are still working together at Raveis where we do have a dedicated career development department for new and experienced agents.

If you could wave a magic wand and make any change in your industry that you wanted, what would it be?

The national media needs to temper the real estate news. Like politics, all real estate is local and in many towns across the South Shore, property values, as well as the number of homes sold, have increased over last year. A real estate professional knows the true picture on the local level, but unfortunately consumers may never receive that information because they react to what they hear on the national news and put the brakes on their moving plans. What we should be talking about are the opportunities before us now that will not be here forever – low interest rates, lower prices, and more inventory to choose from. It is a great time to buy and that word needs to get out.

What's the best thing about your job?

The best thing about my job is the outstanding team of real estate professionals with whom I have the privilege and honor of working – they are absolutely top notch, and I look forward to coming to work every day and interacting with them. They truly work together as a team, and the level of trust and camaraderie in our office is unlike anything I have ever experienced in this business.

So, how's business these days, anyway?

We are having a terrific year. Our sales volume has more than doubled over last year at this time.

William Raveis Real Estate is located at 53 Railroad Avenue in Duxbury. Call 781-934-2104 or e-mail Debbie.Tortorella@Raveis.com